

Common Sense Solutions Would Bring Border Progress

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Everyone has an opinion about illegal immigration. As I've listened to it debated in Congress, I've often been frustrated at the way many members of Congress have politicized the issue. They seem more interested in scoring political points than in solving problems.

Yet even in today's highly charged partisan environment, you would think Congress could unite behind taking the strong and important first step of securing our borders.

The importance of taking this critical step was reinforced when I traveled to Nogales, Ariz., last week with a group of congressmen to meet with U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials and tour our border with Mexico.

On my trip, I met many dedicated professionals who are literally on the front lines of a never-ending battle with drug dealers, smugglers, counterfeiters, and human traffickers. And while Congress has been arguing, they've been acting. And they're starting to get results.

The Border Patrol is using a combination of personnel, technology and infrastructure improvements as part of its Secure Border Initiative. I was able to observe the coordinated use of mobile sensor towers, radar, infrared ground sensors, rapid response teams, helicopters, cameras and advanced x-ray machines to monitor the border and inspect cargo. I talked to agents about the benefits of modern strategic fencing in urban areas and saw the futility of

building fences in remote wilderness areas where they can easily be breached.

Customs and Border Protection agents are making these investments because they know that securing our border means more than just stopping illegal immigration. But, despite these recent documented successes in Nogales, where arrests have gone down and seizures of illegal drugs and counterfeit goods have gone up, significant problems remain.

My trip to the border has made me realize that breaking the logjam on immigration policy should start with developing bipartisan solutions to our border security problems. We need to invest more in border security, from technology to personnel to equipment.

I believe we can bridge party lines if we focus first on this important issue.